

**Presentation to the Legislative Interim Committee on Children, Families, Health and Human Services**

August 25, 2016



# **YOUTH CRISIS DIVERSION PROJECT**

**A ROADMAP FOR HELPING YOUTH IN CRISIS**

## **Missoula and Helena**

### **Key Points**

1. Total number served during two year period of these grants:"  
Missoula – 83 in FY 16 (in just 6+ months) and 45 in FY 15 = Total of 128  
Helena – 12 since January 2016 and 10 in FY 15 = Total of 22
2. Data Handout
3. What we tried to solve
  - a. A response to families in crisis due to the disturbance of their children and to get services to them as quickly as possible.
  - b. Also, to avoid unnecessary removal from the home and high end hospitalization stays if avoidable.
  - c. And create a model for our mental health services for crisis response children and families.
4. Our approach
  - a. Avoid crisis by getting good information and access to services out immediately – a website!
  - b. Find and be there when families do come forward panicked to get help – create a contact point in the community... the hospital(s) and schools.
  - c. Help them find services – Crisis Facilitation with a qualified mental health practitioner.
  - d. If the youth in crisis needs to be stabilized out of the family have a local residential crisis stabilization program – utilizing Youth Shelters for adolescents and specially trained emergency foster care providers for younger children.
  - e. Get mental health services and support to the family quickly – develop collaboration among the local mental health centers that serve youth and families to insure available in home services.



5. What seems to be most critical in the success of the effort?
- That point of 1<sup>st</sup> contact and where it exists unique to each community and, if there, isn't one where can it be created.
  - Collaboration, collaboration, collaborate! Crisis is not good for business (compared to a waiting list) but it is critical to a family in crisis.
6. What have been the outcomes?
- In Missoula....
    - We have served a good number of families – 129 to date and 79 in the last 6 months of FY 16.
    - Agencies are working more together than in decades.
    - Most youth have not been hospitalized during the process nor within the next 6 months.
    - Families report (90%) that they felt they got help.
  - In Helena...
    - This Project has had a hard time getting traction!
    - Only served 20 families
    - What youth we have served have done well.
    - Not sure we have reached the truly stressed families we hoped to reach.
    - Agencies have not collaborated yet and the hospitals have not joined in and they are critical... to serve those who need hospitalization and to divert families to a level of services that better fits their needs.
7. So what have we learned?
- Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate!!!
  - Have the 4 key elements in place – a key point of 1<sup>st</sup> contact, a front loaded, intensive case management and evaluation services, access to in home mental health services and a placement option for crisis stabilization.



8. What I would ask of the Committee?
- Unfortunately, I don't think we yet know enough to develop a statewide system for crisis response. I would ask the Committee to support and even urge on-going funding for these projects for another two years (maybe with expansion to 7 sites). And it, most likely, would have to be funded with general funds again.

Thank you for your time and interest!

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